

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of *Allah*,  
most Kind, most Merciful

Surah an-Nisa 4:1

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي  
تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ

And be careful (of your duty to)  
*Allah* from whom you claim  
[your rights] of one another,  
and [be careful of your duty]  
to family relationships.

### Learning Objectives

- To understand what is meant by keeping good relations with family, and what it involves
- To know with whom we must keep good family relations
- To know the benefits of keeping good family relations.

### Key Words

rahim  
رَحِم family members  
related by blood

silah  
صَلَّة to connect; to join

ihsaan  
احْسَان kindness

qurba  
قُرْبِي close relatives

## What is meant by keeping good relations with family?

We have already learned the special position our parents have. Islam also teaches us that it is very important to treat the rest of our family members with love and care, and to help them as much as possible. This includes:

- our **immediate** family; for example our mum, dad, step-parents, brothers and sisters, **and**
- our **extended** family; for example our grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews, and nieces, etc.

The Arabic term for this is *silat ar-rahim*.

*Rahim* literally means womb, and refers to our blood relatives. *Silah* means to connect or to join. The term *silat ar-rahim* means to connect with our family members that are related by blood, and to keep good relations with them.

### DID YOU KNOW?

In some *hadiths* we are told that people who live with us, such as a nanny, a maid, or a servant, are also considered as part of our family, and this means we have to treat them with kindness as well.

## With which family members must we keep good relations?

Islam teaches us that we must keep good relations with all our family members, even if our family members are:

● **Muslim or non-Muslim**

● **well-behaved or badly-behaved**

● **grateful or ungrateful;**

A man complained to *Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq* (a) about his relatives. The *Imam* (a) said to him,

“ ” Swallow your anger and behave nicely [with them].

The man said again,

“ ” But they cause all sorts of trouble.

The *Imam* (a) told him,

“ ” Do you want to be like them? If so, then *Allah* will not have mercy for you.

● **rich or poor**

● **close or distant relatives**

● **mahram or non-mahram**

● **living close-by or far away**

*Rasulullah* encouraged keeping good relations with family even if it means having to travel long distances. He said to *Imam Ali* (a),

“ ” O *'Ali*! Even if you have to travel for two years to do good to your parents, do it; even if you have to travel for one year to connect with your family members then do so.

# DID YOU KNOW?

Some *hadiths* mention that for every step a person takes to visit his relatives, he gets forty thousand rewards, forty thousand of his sins are forgiven, and his spiritual status is raised by forty thousand levels.

## STORYTIME!



The act of *silat ar-rahim* is so important that Islam teaches us we have to be kind to our relatives even if they are mean to us.

When *Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a)* was about to leave this world, he made a will for some money to be given to one of his cousins. One of his servants said to him,

“” Master! You are leaving money for someone who once attacked you with a sword?

The *Imam (a)* replied,

“” Do you think I should not be included among those about whom the *Qur'an* says: And those who join that which *Allah* has ordered to be joined and have fear of their Lord and fear the evil reckoning. (*Surat ar-Ra'd*, 13:21)

# REMEMBER...

Keeping good relations with family means that next time you have a fight with your brother or sister, you have to be kind to them even if they are mean to you.



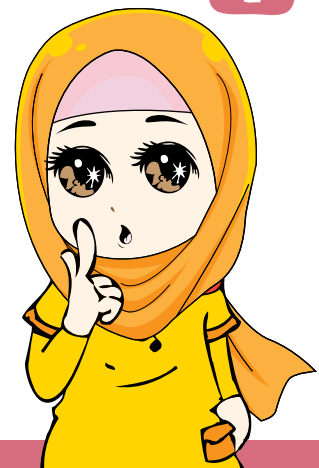
## What does keeping good relations with family actually involve doing?

Any behaviour we do to our relatives that is good and kind is considered to be keeping good relations with family. This can include;

**Keeping in touch;** the simplest way is to say '*Salam Alaykum*' or even conveying this to them through someone, or by phoning, emailing, texting, or chatting on WhatsApp, or even sending them a card or letter.



salam



## What does keeping good relations with family actually involve doing?

**Praying for our relatives;** not harming them in any way; this is the very minimum kindness we can do for them.

Praying for them; we should remember them in our prayers and ask *Allah* to fulfill their wishes.

**Helping them when they are in difficulty;** this may be giving them charity or even a loan, helping them find jobs, helping them in their housework or chores, advising them in matters of religion, etc.

**Wishing for them what we wish for ourselves;** this is one of the highest stages of keeping good relations with family.

*Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq* (a) once said,

Keep good relations with your relatives and near ones even if it is just by offering a glass of water to them.

## REMEMBER...

Helping our relatives is *wajib* even if they do not approach us themselves directly but we come to know of their difficulty through someone else.



## ACTIVITY...

Can you suggest ways to perform *silat ar-rahim* to the following people:

**Your mum and your dad**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Your brother or your sister**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Your aunty who lives in another country**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Your cousin who is studying at university**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

*Surat al-Nahl* 16:90

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ  
وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ

Surely *Allah* orders justice, and kindness towards relatives.

## What are the benefits of keeping good relations with family?

*Allah* is so kind that He gives us benefits in both this world and in the Hereafter if we keep good relations with our family:

- It helps us to develop a good character and become good Muslims. Kindness becomes part of our nature and our soul is purified
- Our life is extended and death is delayed
- Our good deeds are accepted
- Our sustenance (*rizq*) increases.
- The accounting of our deeds in the Hereafter is made easy for us
- We will be able to easily cross the bridge (*sirat*) that passes over Hell

*Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq* (a) once told a companion called *Muyassir*,

O' *Muyassir*, the time of your death had arrived many times but *Allah* has postponed it due to your kindness to relatives and good behaviour toward them.

### Faith in Action

- 1 Sit down with your mom or dad and draw their family tree as much as you can.
- 2 Email, phone, WhatsApp, Skype, FaceTime, or send a card or letter to a relative you have not spoken to in a while to ask how they are.



## HIGHER LEVEL

### OUR ISLAMIC FAMILY

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ

Indeed the believers are brothers.  
(*Surat al-Hujurat 49:10*)

We must not forget that outside our immediate family and blood relatives, we also have a family consisting of our *Shi'a* brothers and sisters, regardless of their language, ethnicity or race, with whom we share the wilayah of *Ahlul Bayt* (a).

We are also part of the wider Islamic community (*ummah*) with no geographical or cultural boundaries.

As such, we also have to care for and show kindness to our brothers and sisters in faith.

- 1 There are many Muslims around the world who are suffering on a daily basis. Do you know where some of these places are?
- 2 Can you think of ways we can practice *silat ar-rahim* towards our Muslim brothers and sisters suffering around the world?

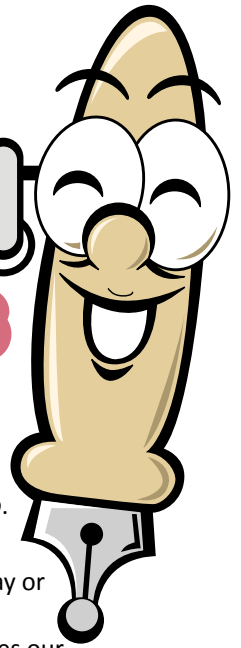
There is also a hadith from *Rasulullah* (s) that says,

“ I and *Ali* are the fathers of this nation (*ummah*).

*Rasulullah* and our *Imams* are our spiritual fathers. It is only through love and obedience to them that we can achieve spiritual perfection.

## KEYPOINTS

- 1 Any behaviour we do to our relatives that is good and kind is considered as keeping good family relations.
- 2 Keeping good family relations is *wajib*.
- 3 The minimum we can do for our relatives is not to hurt them in any way or allow any harm to come to them.
- 4 Keeping good family relations increases our sustenance and lifespan, and makes our accounting in the Hereafter easier.





- 1 Apart from our family and relatives, who else should we keep good relations with?
- 2 What is the minimum goodness we can do for our relatives?
- 3 List some ways you can do *silat ar-rahim* to your family members.
- 4 List one benefit of keeping good family relations that we can get in this world, and one benefit we can get in the Hereafter.